THE AUTOMATIC TRADE.

The Evolution of the Slot Machine From a Scale to a Store-

keeper.

Railway Stations Crowded With All Sorts and the Train Boys' Business in Danger.

How the Machine Wight be Used to Advantage in the Field of Practical Politics

New York Times: The slot machine as it s commonly called, which now ornaments railway stations all over the civilized world, s certainly an ingenious invention, and it seems capable of almost indefinite expanion. In the beginning it was simply weighing machine, which, after a coin had been dropped in the slot, proceeded to weigh the dropper with more or less inaccuracy. The fact that it was always ready for business, that no one had to send round to the next beer shop to call it, and that it works without making any remarks made it immensely popular. Forthwith other machines on the same principle were invented. At the present time railway stations all over the civilized world are lined with machines that are ready to provide cigars, caramels, note paper, hairpins, and scores of other articles. Every week or two a new machine makes its appearance, and it is evident that the principle of automatic trade, if it may be so called, is only in its infancy. Whether it is practicable to substitute a slot machine for the person who now stands behind a small window and scornfully sells railway tickets is not yet clear.

small window and scornfully sells railway tickets is not yet clear.

But there can be nothing in the way of substituting a slot machine for the peripatetic train boy. Such a machine—or p series of such machines—placed in the end of a railway car would completely drive the train boy out of business. Anyone who might wish to buy a paper or a package of gund drops—assuming that anyone ever does want to buy gum drops—would infinitely prefer to buy of a modest, silent machine rather than of an exasperating, noisy boy. Moreover, the machine could not slam the doors nor yount the merits of

chine rather than of an exasperating, hoisy boy. Moreover, the machine could not slam the doors nor vaunt the merits of prize packages. Indeed, such a manifest improvement would such a machine be over the ordinary train boy, that the railway which first adopts the improvement will find its immediate reward in the popularity which it would inevitably secure.

The field of politics has not yet been invaded by the slot machine, but the field is there, and it is a very large one. An immense amount of trouble could be saved to the postoffice department if a slot machine were to be placed outside the door of the postmaster-general inscribed: "Put in a contribution to the next campaign fund and take out a postoffice." This would save the aspirants for postoffices the trouble of securing "indorsements" from their congressmen, and would save the postmaster-general and his subordinates the labor and vexation of listening to personal applications. Of course, hypercritical persons would characterize such a system of distributing postoffices as one of lasteria and sais but every really practical cal persons would characterize such a sys-tem of distributing postoffices as one of bargain and sale, but every really practical politician would see the injustice of such a slander. Every citizen has a right to con-tribute to a campaign fund, and it is not at all unusual for a man who has contributed largely to receive a postmastership or even a cabinet office. To accuse such a man of having bought his office would be mani-festly unjust, and a clear-headed business man like our present postmaster-general must be perfectly aware of this fact, But where the machine would be most

useful would be in a closely-contested state, like Indiana, for example, as a substitute like Indiana, for example, as a substitute for a ballot-box. Each party might have its own machine at every polling booth with the inscription: "Put in a ballot and take out a dollar." This would be perfectly fair to both parties, and would put a stop to the reckless increase of prices which takes place in a heated campaign. In this way that frugality which every political platform always favors would be signally promoted. For example, were the machines to be used in Indiana to return only \$1 for each ballot, the corrupt practice of refusing to vote for less than \$10 would be effectually broken up. Each party would be effectually broken up. Each party would offer equal inducements to the voter, and there would be an end of the extravagance on the one hand and the extortion on the

on the one hand and the extortion on the other which, at the last election in Indiana, justly annoyed the friends of pure government who belonged to the defeated party. If Mr. Edison or some other habitual inventor would give his whole mind to the development of the slot machine, we should soon find it taking the place of human labor in nearly all the departments of life. Those people whose idea of divine service is a sermon could save themselves the cost of a minister and of pew rent by having an ecclesiastical machine which would furnish a sermon in exchange for a coin, and the slot machine might even be combined with a washing machine so as to take the place washing machine so as to take the place of a laundress. There is really no limit to the possibilities which the machine pre-sents, and we ought not to delay to avail ourselves of them.

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